

January 26, 1973

Honorable John Tunney
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tunney,

President Nixon's determination to recast the framework of government, as expressed in the reshuffling of senior officials, and in statements reflecting the program-retrenchment intentions of the Office of Management and Budget has introduced many shockwaves among different constituencies, of which I am sure you are indeed very well aware. In these circumstances it is difficult to make a credible case that the deleterious impact of a budget-cut in one arena is worse than it might be in another and I feel especially diffident in raising such a question where I have so obvious a personal interest to defend.

I am equally concerned, however, that if we do not speak out it may be taken for granted that we will be able to weather this crisis without serious harm; regretfully, I must say that I do not have that optimism. Specifically what I must point out is that the threatened termination of the long-standing program of training grant support from NIH for graduate students in biomedical research will have catastrophic consequences for this and other distinguished departments in their very capacity to serve in their primary educational functions and that esteemed private institutions, like Stanford, will suffer particularly serious blows.

These training grant programs have, of course, been authorized and funded by congressional act over the years, and the reversal of policy now proposed by the administration is in direct confrontation with that intent. The President evidently intends to use his asserted prerogatives in impounding funds, as well as to present the fait accompli in the form of a proposed reduction in the executive budget for these functions. I hope that you and your colleagues in the congress will give this particular issue your searching attention before you condone an act that will go far to wipe out the standard of excellence in higher and graduate education that we in California have been so proud of over the years.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr